





## Negotiations under way on Aqaba railway ownership

By P.V. Vivekanand  
Jordan Times Staff Writer

AMMAN — Negotiations are under way among the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Transport and the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) and the transfer of ownership of the Aqaba Railway Corporation (ARC) to the JPMC, according to officials. The railway corporation, which is exclusively used to transport phosphate and other related minerals from JPMC mines in the south to Aqaba for export, is a wholly-government-owned entity. It has been steadily losing and the government now feels that the JPMC should bear the burden, according to economists.

"The entire operations of the corporation are devoted to the Phosphate Mines Company, and the government apparently feels that the company should absorb the losses," an economist told the Jordan Times.

The government is also a majority shareholder in the Phosphate Mines Company, "which is now in a better position in view of increased exports of its products," added the economist, who spoke to

the Jordan Times on condition of anonymity. No figures were immediately available on the operational losses of the corporation.

The focus of the ongoing negotiations is the value of the "rolling stock" of the railway corporation — engines, carriages and loading equipment etc., JPMC Director-General Wasef Azar told the Jordan Times Friday. He declined to give any specific details of the talks, conducted by representatives of the ministries of the finance and transport and the board of directors of the JPMC.

"The government has offered to transfer the ownership of the 'rolling stock' of the corporation to the JPMC," Azar said. "The talks are continuing, and it is premature to give any details." Other sources said a decision on the transfer of ownership of the "mobile assets" of the corporation — estimated at between JD 14 million and JD 15 million — was expected soon. The deal does not include the railway tracks and some of the fixed facilities of the corporation since they are located on government-owned land.

The Aqaba Railway Corporation was created in 1975 as

part of the Hijaz Railway Corporation and was branched out as a separate entity in 1979. The corporation, which has a rail network of 290 kilometres linking JPMC mines at Al Hasa, Shadiyah and Wadi Al Abiad, now owns 29 locomotive engines and 400 wagons of capacity ranging between 40 and 45 tonnes.

According to informed sources, the negotiations also involve questions over whether the JPMC would be responsible for the corporation's liabilities — mostly loans obtained for expansion purposes, including the building of a \$5 million locomotive workshop at Aqaba, according to the sources. The government is proposing that it remain responsible for other liabilities, related to the rail network itself, while the loans linked to the facilities of the corporation that will be transferred to the JPMC be handled by the company.

If the deal goes through, the JPMC may set up a different department to run the corporation, which has about 700 permanent employees and about 300 temporary workers on daily wage basis, the sources said.

## Jordan to contribute to Arab document on care for children

AMMAN (Petra) — Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) is taking part in a pan-Arab meeting opening in Tunis Saturday to prepare an Arab document on children care which will be submitted to Arab heads of state for approval prior to its presentation to the international summit on children due to be held in New York in September.

NHF Director-General Inaam Al Mufti, who is taking part in the Tunis meeting, said that the Arab delegates have already laid down the broadlines of such document at a meeting held in Cairo last month under the auspices of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The projected Arab document, she said, will reflect the Arab Nations' determination to achieve peace which "is indispensable to open the way for the children of Palestine, Lebanon, the Golan

Heights and Africa to grow and develop."

"The document outlines the current situation in the Arab region and focuses attention on the adverse effects of the Israeli occupation of Arab land, the need for an Arab-Israeli settlement and national efforts in rural and Bedouin social development as well as bridging the gap between men and women in the Arab World," Mufti said.

"The document gives special attention to the tragic life of the Palestinian children and calls for an end to their suffering and for their legitimate rights to living in peace and security," Mufti added.

Furthermore, the document urges the heads of world governments to pool their efforts to bring about peace to the Middle East region.

## APC celebrates the Army and Great Arab Revolt Day

KARAK (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Ibn Al Hussein Thursday stood in for His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan in attending the celebration held by the Arab Potash Company (APC) to mark the Army and Great Arab Revolt Day.

Prince Faisal unveiled the plaque of the monument, which was put up by the company to commemorate the martyrs of the Jordanian Armed Forces who, through their sacrifice, contributed to laying down the infrastructure for the factory and safeguarding the achievements of Jordan.

APC Director General Ali Al Nsour expressed his appreciation and that of the company for the great services of the Armed Forces. He said that Jordan enjoys a unique status among the world countries, after the Soviet

Union and the United States in the fertiliser industry.

Talking about potash industry in Jordan, Nsour said it dates back to the 1930s when Jordan started extracting it from the Dead Sea.

He pointed out that the APC hit its production capacity of 1.2 million tonnes in 1987 and was able to increase the capacity by a further 16 per cent as a result of the improvements the company made. However, he said, the company targets 2.2 million tonnes a year by the year 1996, through two stages: during the first stage, which ends by 1994, the company plans to increase its production capacity to 1.8 million tonnes a day.

In the second stage, which will end in 1996, the company will have hit its 2.2 million tonnes of annual production.

AMMAN (Petra) — Ministers of agriculture and planning in the four-member Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) countries ended two days of meetings in Amman during which they reached decisions on ways to implement ACC agreements in agriculture and planning.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra Friday said that the ministers of agriculture have reached agreement on an executive programme to unify legislations in Egypt, Iraq, Yemen and Jordan concerning veterinary work, the use of pesticides combatting desert locusts and laying down the basis for a data bank to provide information to ACC members in agriculture-related fields.

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# Earthquake deals blow to Iran's agriculture

DUBAI (R) — The earthquake which has killed tens of thousands of Iranians has also ravaged a major farming area and could present Tehran with a huge bill for food imports.

Iran is already spending about \$3 billion a year on food imports, more than 20 per cent of its hard currency earnings, according to a Western expert in Tehran.

Economists were unwilling to guess at the damage to Iranian agriculture in the confusion following Thursday's earthquake but said they feared it would be serious.

The two worst-hit provinces of Gilan, on the Caspian Sea coast, and Zanjan to the south, are important fruit, rice, and wheat-growing areas.

Helicopter pilots over Gilan reported total devastation. With thousands of labourers among the casualties, irrigation systems damaged and pro-

duce spoiled in some districts, the onus for the Iranian economy looked bad.

Damage toaddy fields would be especially serious, economists said, because much of last year's rice crop was destroyed by another natural disaster, floods.

Economists said Tehran would probably have to import emergency supplies of food.

To feed Iran's 50 million

people, it has already had to resort to emergency imports to top up stockpiles which have barely kept ahead of demand.

According to Western economists, Iran even had to buy a small amount of wheat from Saudi Arabia to head off a food crisis late last year.

The government has tried to reduce subsidies on many foodstuffs but Iranian economists say it dare not stop subsidising staples such as bread and cooking oil.

That would force millions of poorer people to pay freemarket prices, which are many times higher, and risk popular unrest.

Economists said estimates of food subsidies had doubled to around \$4.7 billion this year.

Iran's farm sector has long been in bad shape, the victim of inefficiency, soil erosion, outdated land laws which have caused a flight to the cities by peasants, misguided government subsidies and a distorted foreign currency exchange rate.

Agricultural economists estimate Iran's yield of wheat per hectare at some 1,700 kilograms in irrigated areas and 640 kilogramme in dry areas.

This is about half the world average for countries with similar climates and Thursday's earthquake can only have cut this year's crops, they said.

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## ANC not wedded to socialism —Mandela

NEW YORK (R) — Nelson Mandela, triggering a wave of adulation through New York that some are calling "Mandela mania," attempted in a series of interviews Thursday to allay fears that if his movement triumphed it would move to nationalise South Africa's wealth.

But he also sparked some controversy as he repeatedly and in powerful language refused to disown three world leaders often at odds with the United States — the PLO's Yasser Arafat, Cuba's Fidel Castro and Libya's Muammar Qadhafi, saying they had aided his cause.

Meanwhile, Harlem, the black capital of America, gave him its heart Thursday night and Yankee Stadium — where baseball is often a lost cause — suddenly had a winner.

Mandela gave rousing speeches to more than 50,000 New Yorkers crammed into the famed stadium and at least 100,000 more who crowded the main street of Harlem to cheer lustily and weep

openly on the spot where black heroes have traditionally voiced their dreams.

The South African black leader left Yankee Stadium to the cheers of thousands wearing a Yankee jacket and cap, saying, "I know who I am. I am a Yankee." The stadium houses the team with the worst record in baseball.

In a free-wheeling television interview, attended by a wildly enthusiastic audience of 1,000, Mandela was asked if he would impose a Marxist or Socialist government and said, I don't care if the cat is black or white — as long as it catches mice."

In an interview with the New York Times, he said South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) was not wedded to Socialism and supported state participation in the economy only to the extent it was needed to redress gross disparities in wealth between whites and blacks.

Mandela is expected to further discuss his vision of a South African future in a speech to the

United Nations Friday and in a news conference there.

Not even the Empire State Building was immune to the "Mandela mania" sweeping New York. It was lit up Thursday night in the gold, green and black colours of the African National Congress of which Mandela is deputy president.

Harlem called itself the Soweto of America for the night as people grabbed every available inch of space on 125th Street at Seventh Avenue to hear him declare that apartheid was doomed.

Mandela, 71, showed charm and conviction in his television interview. He refused to disown Arafat, Qadhafi and Castro.

"One of the mistakes political analysts make is to think their enemies should be our enemies. Our attitude toward any country is their attitude toward our struggle."

"Qadhafi, Castro and Arafat support our struggle to the hilt... we identify with the PLO because they are fighting for the right of

self-determination just like we are."

Amid hisses, American Jewish Congress leader Henry Siegman, who had met in Geneva with Mandela to discuss his support of Arafat, accused the black leader of "amoralism" in his support of the three. Mandela retorted, "we have no time to look into the internal affairs of other countries."

The close questioning of Mandela's friendship for Arafat reflected the tenseness of black-Jewish relations in the United States. Mandela went to great lengths to praise Jewish support for his cause, the high number of Jews in his organisation and his belief that Israel has a right to exist within secure borders.

The televised interview ended with an eight-year-old boy saying if Mandela needed help all he had to do was send a postcard and the youth would "even, even send money." Mandela called him up to the stage for an embrace.

## Arms sales to Third World in sharp decline, report says

WASHINGTON (AP) — The value of arms sales by major suppliers such as the United States and Soviet Union to Third World clients has dropped more than 50 per cent in recent years, according to a study by the Congressional Research Service.

The total value of arms agreements with the Third World was \$29.3 billion in 1989, down from \$61.4 billion in the peak year 1982, said the study by the congressional agency.

Saudi Arabia and Iraq have been, by a wide margin, the top Third World arms buyers from the United States and the Soviet Union, at 14.1 per cent, respectively, of the weapons transfers.

The report attributed the overall decline to two factors:

Third World clients are still absorbing massive arms deliveries they ordered in the 1970s and 1980s, and aren't buying expensive new weapons. Their purch-

ases in recent years have included a greater proportion of spare parts and ammunition — less costly than aircraft, tanks or ships.

Secondly, many Third World countries are burdened by heavy debt and unwilling or unable to buy as many weapons as they did. Even oil-rich nations have cut back on some arms buys as world oil prices have dropped.

Also, the end of the eight-year Iran-Iraq war in 1988 has reduced orders from the two combatants which accounted in large measure for the massive increase in arms sales in the early and mid-1980s, the study found.

The United States accounted for 26 per cent of the arms agreements with the Third World, but its total sales agreements fell from \$9.3 billion in 1988 to \$7.7 billion last year.

The U.S. figures only include government-to-government agreements, excluding commercial sales for which the data are incomplete, the report said. But this exclusion does not affect the U.S. ranking among others arms suppliers, it added.

The value of commercial arms deliveries in fiscal year 1989 fell to \$1.61 billion from \$3.3 billion the previous year, according to State Department figures.

The value of Soviet arms agreements, which accounted for 38.4 per cent of the weapons transfers to the Third World, fell from \$14.7 billion in 1988 to \$11.2 billion in 1989.

In addition to a drop in demand, the decline in Soviet sales could also reflect a Kremlin decision to cut back its support for Third World clients who cannot pay in hard cash.

Still, in 1989 the Soviets were the major supplier to eight of the top 10 Third World arms recipients, the study said. They were: Afghanistan, Angola, Vietnam, Syria, Iraq, Libya, Cuba and India.

Iran's major supplier was China; Saudi Arabia's was the United Kingdom.

Arms agreements with Afghanistan more than tripled from 1982 to 1989, to \$8.6 billion. Angola and Vietnam increased their arms purchase agreements 37 per cent and 12 per cent, respectively, in the same period.

Syria declined 56.4 per cent, Iraq 43.4 per cent, and Libya 30.3 per cent, the report said.

## Canada's Meech Lake agreement in trouble

Montreal (AP) — A constitutional agreement aimed at keeping French-speaking Quebec in the Canadian federation is on the brink of death, blocked in two provinces as the deadline for passage approached.

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney Thursday flew to St. John's, Newfoundland, one of the holdouts, in an effort to save the agreement, which must be ratified by all 10 provinces by midnight Saturday or expire. He warned that sinking the accord could prompt another referendum in Quebec — this time by the separatists.

Troubles loomed too in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where a legislator has managed to block debate for a week on the agreement.

Eight of the provinces favour the Meech Lake Accord, as it is called, and Mulroney is one of the most ardent supporters of the agreement.

In a restrained but tough address, Mulroney confronted Newfoundland's 52-seat legislature with the possibility of constitutional paralysis, economic problems and increased support for the separatist cause.

"On that night, when you're sitting there with your family and your children, one thought is going to go through your mind: Do you mean to tell me that we could have avoided all of this for Meech Lake?" Mulroney said.

"If that night were ever to come, the terms of Meech Lake are going to look very, very reasonable indeed to every member of this house of assembly and every house of assembly across Canada."

One hour after Mulroney concluded his address, a bomb threat forced a 45-minute evacuation of the legislature.

The five-point agreement would designate Quebec a "distinct society," something the supreme court would be obliged to consider when looking at specific laws challenged under the constitution.

The Meech Lake agreement, first approved by the prime minister and the premiers of the provinces in 1987, is aimed at winning Quebec's signature on Canada's 1982 constitution. At that time, the ministers set a three-year deadline for approval by the parliament and legislatures.

In the interim, governments

## Berlin's Checkpoint Charlie removed

WEST BERLIN (R) — Building cranes removed the Checkpoint Charlie border post, a symbol of the cold war, from its site near the Berlin Wall Friday in a ceremony attended by foreign ministers of the four World War II allies.

Newfoundland Premier Clyde Wells put the agreement up for a vote in his legislature, where it is still being debated.

The biggest challenge has come from Manitoba. Legislator Elijah Harper, who is a Cree is the only Indian in the provincial legislature, has said he will kill Meech Lake because it does not take native rights into consideration.

Many of the Indians and Inuit leaders of Canada believe their societies are as distinct as Quebec's, and they also want to be recognised in the constitution.

Manitoba law requires public hearings before a vote on constitutional amendments, and procedural delays introduced by Harper have pushed debate back so far that it may be impossible to pass the measure before the deadline.

For many Quebecois in Montreal, Canada's second-largest city, the arguments have worn thin and the endless debate over a document thought signed and sealed in 1987 has led to widespread cynicism and a rise in nationalist feelings.

A poll published Thursday in the French-language newspaper La Presse indicated that 57 per cent of Quebecois favour sovereignty, up slightly from 56 per cent in March.

But, unlike a decade ago when a referendum was held by the separatist Parti Quebecois to determine the future of the province, passion is missing.

"I think people have accepted that it (Meech Lake) won't pass with a shrug," said Robert Gagnon, a computer systems specialist for a Montreal insurance company.

An exception to that feeling came from cabby Roger Solari, asked about independence for Quebec, he responded with a vigorous "ah, oui." Slapping the steering wheel for emphasis. "They don't want us. We're better off independent."

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## Soviets pull nuclear arms out of trouble spots

WEST BERLIN (R) — The Soviet Union is withdrawing some nuclear weapons from the Baltic republics, Transcaucasia and Eastern Europe because of concern over internal unrest and the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, NATO sources said Friday.

Security has been sharply increased at all Soviet bases with nuclear weapons, they added, citing U.S. and West German intelligence reports.

"They are worried that these weapons might fall into the wrong hands and they want to be very sure that it doesn't happen," said one source, who asked not to be identified.

Moscow had moved the weapons, thought to be short-range missiles and some nuclear artillery shells, back to the Russian Republic — close to central control.

"We're not sure exactly how many we've moved, but it's not a huge amount," said another source. "It doesn't seem to involve strategic nuclear weapons, which tend to be based elsewhere."

The Baltic republics have been the scene of nationalist unrest and independence bids by Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia while fighting between ethnic groups in Transcaucasia flared earlier this year.

The presence of Soviet troops and nuclear weapons on the soil of the once-reliable Warsaw Pact allies in Eastern Europe has been a source of concern to the West.

"They said fighters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) armed with guns and knives, stormed the Muslim village of Nittavu in Eastern Amparai district and hacked and chopped their victims."

The sources said the rebels had used knives instead of guns fearing shots would alert the security forces close by.

The attacks had accused residents of the coastal village of giving information to advancing troops earlier in the week about the location of Tiger hideouts.

The alleged massacre took place less than 24 hours after Deputy Defence Minister Ranjan Wijeratne said security forces had

## Shevardnadze: Allies should leave Berlin

some 12,000 troops stationed in their sectors of West Berlin and the Soviet Union has more than 360,000 troops deployed in East Germany and East Berlin.

Shevardnadze's proposal could mean the departure of allied troops by next June, since West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl has proposed pan-German elections on Dec. 9, followed by the immediate accession of East Germany to Bonn's Federal Republic.

The Soviet foreign minister proposed that when allied troops withdrew, all other aspects of the city's special status should disappear.

"These include allied air control, a ban on all German military forces in the city — frequently violated by East Germany's former Communist regime — and the right of the allies to ban political demonstrations."

"I wish Berlin peace, calm and well-being. May it become one of the biggest centres of the new system of security and stability in Europe and a connecting bridge between East and West in Europe," Shevardnadze said.

The Soviet Union is isolated in the "two-plus-four" talks in its opposition to a unified Germany becoming a full member of NATO.

The three Western allies have

## Tamil Tigers massacre 62 Muslims in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO (R) — Tamil separatist guerrillas hacked to death 62 Muslims in Sri Lanka's eastern province on Friday, accusing them of being government informants, security sources said.

They said fighters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) armed with guns and knives, stormed the Muslim village of Nittavu in Eastern Amparai district and hacked and chopped their victims.

The Tigers had retreated to the jungles as columns of troops advanced on the main town in the Amparai, Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts.

The residents in the area said the Tigers, fighting for an independent state for Sri Lanka's Tamil minority, had regrouped in the outskirts of the towns.

The Tigers launched attacks on June 11 on police stations and army camps in the northeast.

They overran 30 police stations, abducted 800 policemen and seized arms and ammunition.

The security forces launched a counter-offensive and recaptured the eastern province from the Tigers. They were moving to clear the rebels from the northern sector, Wijeratne told reporters Thursday.

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They were treated at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, a nurse for alleged neglect of duty. Angry nurses assaulted a physician and doctors walked out, halting hospital services for two days.

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